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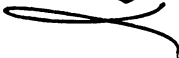
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to see this.

Edwin Gurel J.B.A.

10.2.03  


(Gairdner  
ZFP



**Little Books on Religion**

*Edited by* W. ROBERTSON NICOLI, LL D.

**FAITH, HOPE, LOVE**

'We look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

2 COR. iv. 18.

THE THREE THINGS  
THAT ABIDE  
**Faith : Hope : Love**

(1 COR. xiii. 13)

BY

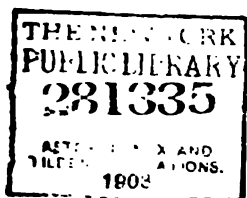
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LONDON  
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27 PATERNOSTER ROW

1903  
J.F.





## P R E F A C E

THE origin of this small volume, stated briefly, is as follows:—In the summer of 1900 the Rev. Dr. Gentles, minister of the Abbey Parish, Paisley, applied to the author to deliver one of a series of addresses on Sunday evenings in the autumn, on a variety of topics touching the Christian life; the subject being, in this instance, left open to choice, but so as to be in conformity with the general framework of arrangements for the series.

The address on 'Faith' was accordingly delivered in the Abbey Church, to a large audience, and was subsequently reported, in abstract, in a local newspaper, and revised for publication in the *British Weekly* of November 1900. After an interval of two years Dr. Gentles was kind enough

to approach the author again, with the request that two addresses on 'Hope' and 'Love' should be added; offering, at the same time, to deliver these personally in the church, inasmuch as the author was not able to do so. It was then suggested that the three addresses might be combined into a little book; the more so as the second address proved much too long for delivery at one sitting and had therefore to be shortened by considerable excisions. The fourth address, here added, was one published in 1890 by the White Cross Society of Edinburgh University (No. 3 of their first series), but had only a limited circulation among those to whom it was addressed. It is believed that the subject, and particularly the Appendix, may give it a renewed interest for some whose reading extends to philological questions.

W. T. G.

EDINBURGH, *November 19, 1902.*

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# I

## FAITH

Luke xviii. 8.—'Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'

THIS searching inquiry of our Lord (which only St. Luke has transmitted to us) appears at the first reading of it, perhaps, rather out of accord with those other great sayings so fully recorded elsewhere, as to the coming of the kingdom of heaven, expressing unlimited confidence in its stability and its abiding influence. The kingdom of heaven or of God, he said again and again, was to grow up silently—'not with observation'—till from a small seed it reached the proportions of a great tree; it was to be 'like leaven hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.' It was

to be the 'treasure hid in a field,' the 'pearl of great price' which, when a man has found, he is eagerly to purchase for all that he is worth. These sayings do not bear the mark of doubt or misgiving; one cannot read in them that our Lord had anything but a most confident anticipation as to the ultimate survival, or good and abiding effect, of his own life and teaching. There is in them no note of discouragement, as there appears to be in the present inquiry. It cannot but be that our Lord must have had all along the glorious prospect of his ultimate reign over the hearts of men. But it is not less apparent that here, in his final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, he allowed himself to dwell at times, sadly, if not despondently, on the repudiation of his mission by the world—the 'contradiction of sinners,' the coldness and indifference, the growing enmity among his countrymen, leading up to that great and awful impending shadow of the



cross, and the all-but-fatal discouragement which, as we know, fell on his own nearest and dearest disciples when he was so taken from them by a calamity which they could neither foresee nor understand. It was, in fact, the forecast of that dark shadow that now suggested this meditative inquiry, spoken, according to the narrative, immediately after the parable of the unjust judge, moved to grant the poor widow's prayer by her very importunity. Would there, indeed, be faith enough in the world to bring about the great results that at other times were so clearly foreseen? faith enough to receive, and rightly to interpret, the lesson of the cross? faith enough to 'cry day and night' unto a long-suffering God, and by the sheer importunity of prayer to bring the reign of justice, and righteousness, and peace out of the confusion of violence, and crime, and wrong-doing which was immediately impending? Such is the human aspect of



this dark saying. Taken in connection with the parable that precedes it, and with all that our Lord has set forth for our encouragement as citizens of his kingdom, it may suggest to us also—after nineteen centuries of Christianity—the need for constant and, as it were, importunate prayer; the very prayer which is embodied in three sublime words by our Lord himself—‘Thy kingdom come.’ We cannot afford—any one of us—to desist from praying for this: for the kingdom of God, though it will surely come, cannot come except by the perpetual asking. We must needs, every one of us, ‘cry night and day’ unto God; not because he is unwilling to grant our requests, but because, in the very nature of them, they can only be granted through the free action of the human spirit. The kingdom of heaven must come, if it is to come at all, in the hearts of men. ‘Thy kingdom come’ is only possible, only conceivable, as the result of the next petition—‘Thy

will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven.'

The immediate object of the present address, however, is not to multiply remarks upon the difficulties and obstacles here anticipated by our Lord to the finding of faith upon the earth; but rather to inquire what is the nature of this great moral and spiritual principle, this immense leverage, as it were, the introduction of which into the world is to bring about, in God's good time, the changes that may be properly described as the coming of the kingdom of heaven. It is clearly to be inferred, from all that is said upon the subject here and elsewhere, that the change is not to be violent or revolutionary. The faith which is to save the world must begin in the heart, and must work from within outwards. Our Lord is no reformer after the more modern fashion, trusting to abrupt alterations in the mechanism and structure of society to bring about the abolition of misery

and sin. Again and again he repudiates such a character, even when his followers wish to force it upon him ; he refuses to be a 'judge and a divider' according to the laws of this world. All through the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere, he leaves the existing organisation of society severely alone, and reaches back to a principle that underlies, and at the same time anticipates, all the laws and customs with which he has to deal, even the Decalogue itself. 'Ye have heard that it hath been said' (on the one hand), 'but I say unto you' (on the other), marks everywhere in that great sermon the distinction between a law (mostly of prohibition) imposed from without ; and a great spiritual influence, or principle, or motive which, if it be taken as a guide in even one solitary heart, will surely bring about the kingdom of heaven there ; and by extension to others by the moral contagion, as it were, of spirit acting on spirit, will bring about the kingdom

of heaven on the earth, just as the leaven, hid in three measures of meal, works silently and unseen, until the whole is leavened.

This, then, is our Lord Jesus Christ's way, and his only way, to cure the evils of our mortal state; whether the evils of the individual soul, or of society at large. Can we then rightly apprehend, from this point of view—this particular quality in the teaching of Jesus—what was the nature of the 'Faith' which he requires of each and all of us; the supreme importance and necessity of which he seems in the text to declare; so much so that if the Son of Man should not, at his coming, find this faith in the earth, his mission would be a failure, and even the great sacrifice of the cross would have been made in vain? Surely we may say that the very anxiety and misgiving expressed in the question entitle us to assume that its importance in our Lord's mind was nothing less than this.

Now, 'Faith' is a very familiar word to all of us, in the New Testament; so familiar, indeed, that it may well be that we use it, in a sense, mechanically, and without apprehending, or perhaps even sometimes trying to apprehend, its real and inward meaning as there employed. Moreover, 'justification by faith' was (as you know) the very pivot, or keystone, of the Lutheran reformation; and thus the definition of the word got to be much canvassed in theological treatises and systems, both Protestant and Catholic. When this is the case, it is very apt to be the case also that the simpler meanings of a word are lost, or at least obscured, by dogmatic statements and interpretations accommodated to the views of the writers. We are not, indeed, at liberty to neglect these, for they are the views of men who were anxiously seeking for truth, and, in many cases, prepared to die for the truth. But we can hardly be wrong in en-

ally to the sinful woman in this very gospel of St. Luke (vii. 50), and apparently in answer to the direct challenge in the thoughts of those present—‘Who is this that forgiveth sins also?’ There was no miraculous or tangible manifestation of spiritual power in this instance; but it cannot be forgotten how many of the miracles of healing which he performed were controlled, as it were, by the same law, and gave rise to the same expression; they were, in fact, answers to the prayer of faith. And it would seem clear, that the faith, which was thus to be powerful for good, may even be in itself and at the moment weak and faint, as in the touching case of healing of the epileptic in Mark (ix. 24: ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief’); or it may be the faith of one not a regular disciple, as in the case of the Syro-Phenician woman; or of one like the Roman centurion, of whom he said, ‘I have not found so great faith, no, not

deavouring to draw from the New Testament itself some clear indication of its own meaning, and the meaning of our Lord, when he said, in the words of our text—‘Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?’ And if, in this difficult inquiry, I should appear to you to abstain too much from certain conventional phrases and modes of expression, I entreat you to believe that it is because I have a most solemn and overwhelming conviction that the Bible is its own best interpreter, and that we shall find therein all that we absolutely need for the right understanding of the words of our Lord and Master.

1. Faith, then, according to the mind of Jesus, is—whatever else—always set forth as a spiritual force of the first order, so much so that it is impossible to assign any limits to its power and influence. ‘Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace’—he says on many occasions, and especi-

in Israel'; faith at which, as we are told (as not being prepared for it), Jesus himself marvelled; inasmuch as, however strong or sincere it may have been, and probably was, it was also the faith of one not previously known to our Lord, and not instructed by him in any kind of doctrine whatever. To his own immediate disciples, on the other hand, Jesus constantly attributes want of faith, and consequent want of power; and on one, or possibly more than one, occasion, he introduces by way of illustration the famous and possibly proverbial image of the mountain cast into the sea, or the sycamore-tree plucked up by the roots. Whatever of orientalisms we may find in these figures of speech, it is, moreover, to be noted that it is not always a fully-instructed, even a very intelligent, man, according to Jesus, that is required to produce great results; but 'faith as a grain of mustard-seed'—that is, a mere germ of faith. This is




sufficient to give effect (Mark xi. 22, 24) to every prayer made to God—‘Have faith in God,’ he says; ‘therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.’ Or, as it is put more generally in the Sermon on the Mount, ‘Every one that asketh, receiveth.’ The prayer of faith, be it ever so little, is always answered.

2. But the nature of the faith which our Lord demands of us—its extreme simplicity, its directness, its unlimited power to do great things even out of its own apparent weakness—is further illustrated, and may be placed in yet a clearer light, by his references on more than one occasion to the case of little children, as having more than others—more than even his own immediate followers—the stamp of greatness in the kingdom of heaven. Take that most touching narrative, as we have it in Matt. xviii., which is no doubt familiar to

all of you. The question as put to Jesus here was—‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And Jesus called a little child to him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’ Without overstraining the argument from this great and most characteristic word of our Lord, or from the corresponding passages in which he declares of little children generally, that ‘of such is the kingdom of heaven,’ it is surely not too much to infer from these weighty sayings that the essential elements of a saving faith are such as can be found in the heart of a little child—nay, that in the limited intellectual survey of these little ones a truly saving faith may find its most legitimate and typical expression.

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'I thank thee, O Father,' he says in another place (Matt. xi. 25), 'because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' What can such allusions mean, in the mouth of our Lord, but that the simple and humble faith which reposes in him without questioning or even any apparent intellectual struggle, is to be preferred to the most highly elaborated and dogmatic confessions and creeds, which can only be mastered through the intellect, and even then may fail to reach the heart? Faith therefore, according to Jesus, is something which may dwell—nay, which does dwell—in the most humble and simple souls; in the hearts of those who in virtue of their very human weakness and humility rely upon God as a child relies upon its parents. And such humble faith is greater in the kingdom of heaven—greater, too, probably, as a spiritual force even on the earth—than what arises out



of the clashing of opinions and dogmatic controversies, or even out of the so-called standards and confessions of any church. May we not conceive of our Lord Jesus Christ, when occupied with the thought of our text, as looking down the long vista of the ages; on the cruelty, superstitions, and corruptions which have claimed a sovereign right in his name over human opinion and belief—the arrogance, the persecutions, the obstruction to all progress for humanity in the way of science (as in Galileo's case)—looking forward to these, might he not have found, even in the Christian churches themselves, more food than ever for his sorrowful anticipations—'Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'

3. What may be taken as the outcome of the preceding remarks is that faith, as our Lord requires it, is more of a moral than of an intellectual quality; it is always


associated with attributes of character that imply trust, confidence, love, more than with those that imply research, knowledge, science, or philosophy; or even theology proper. This is not to affirm that any of these things are disparaged, or discouraged, by Jesus; but only that they are not here in their proper place. The faith that wins the kingdom of heaven, and is greatest there—the faith as of a little child—is something quite apart from, and independent of, all these. But when, in the course of the ages, the church became constructive, and the elements of a ‘Credo’ were built up out of the almost internecine and fierce controversies of the early centuries, the idea of a ‘Catholic faith’ (embodied in propositions) gradually obtained currency, and along with this the idea of exclusion from the Church on the ground of opinion merely—or so-called ‘heresy’; an idea utterly foreign to the New Testament generally, and of



which no hint or trace can be obtained in any of the gospels, or from the recorded words or example of our Lord himself. It would be vain in such an address as this, even were I competent to do so, to attempt the merest outline of the historical evolution of this new and, as I believe, anti-Christian idea; but it received its final expression in the Athanasian creed; and, without dwelling upon this part of the subject, I may merely invite you to contrast the spirit of that well-known instrument of ecclesiastical supremacy—affirming that all who cannot accept ‘whole and undefiled’ a long series of intricate and metaphysical propositions, ‘shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly’—with the simple invitation of the Lord Jesus—‘Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’ Come unto me, says our Lord, just as you are, and without any conditions, and I will give you rest. Come unto me,

says the mediæval church, speaking through the creed, so-called, of Athanasius; but unless you keep, or at least profess to keep, 'the Catholic faith whole and undefiled,' you cannot be saved; you 'shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly.' Can we hesitate for a moment which of these two invitations to accept? Or shall we not rather say, that anything like a real, living faith in Jesus Christ, 'were it but as a grain of mustard-seed,' should emancipate us for ever from the apparent terrors of this stage-thunder of the Church?

4. With reference to the process, however, by which the historic 'Credo' of the church came to be, in the course of centuries, substituted for simple 'faith'—that childlike faith which our Lord not only invites, but prefers to the highest place—there is one remark that I should like to make to you, because, so far as my reading has gone, it has very much escaped the attention of



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commentators, and yet is one of very great significance and importance for the reading aright of the New Testament. The English word 'faith' is a truly noble word, alike in its origins and in its current use—a word that has in a far more than ordinary degree escaped that secular process so well described by Archbishop Trench as the 'degeneration of words.' Springing from the very same root as the Latin 'fides,' and the Greek *πίστις*, it shares with these, indeed, a more ordinary, and a higher or deeper, signification; but in all cases whatever, the moral element—which, as we have seen, is the all-important one as regards Christian faith—is largely predominant, as when we speak of 'good faith' and 'bad faith'; or, when even in the most conventional manner we speak of having faith in any one, or of a servant being faithful to his trust. But, unfortunately, the English noun 'faith' has no corresponding verb attached to it,



as the Greek *πίστις* has, in the language of the New Testament; and accordingly, the verb *πιστεύω* had to be translated either by a periphrasis, or by some other word of distinct origin and of less strictly correlated meaning. Now, the earliest English translators of the New Testament worked upon the model of the Latin Vulgate, which had already, in the fourth century after Christ, become considerably impregnated with ecclesiastical terms. And, as in the Vulgate the verb universally employed for *πιστεύω* was 'credo,' the English versions, naturally enough, adopted the English verb 'believe' as being synonymous with 'credo,' and therefore the most appropriate single word that could be employed to indicate what, in two words, could, without any breach of continuity with the substantive, have perfectly well been used as a rendering of *πιστεύω*—viz. *have faith*. I have no time to illustrate or to dwell upon this; but I will venture

to ask such of you as may feel interested in the matter, to go over your New Testament with a good Concordance, and in the light of previous remarks as regards 'faith,' to try for yourselves the effect of substituting the more complex, but really more accurate, rendering of 'have faith' for 'believe.' I will give you only one instance at present; it may readily be found in that most touching and wonderfully human episode—already referred to—in St. Mark's gospel (ix. 24). The poor afflicted father of the epileptic boy, 'one of the multitude' as we are told, and therefore probably quite unknown to Jesus personally, though he had already besought the disciples in vain to cure his son, comes directly to the Master for help and deliverance. 'If thou canst do any thing,' he says tentatively, as though hardly expecting any positive result. To this the Lord replies, 'If thou canst have faith, all things are possible to him that hath faith.'


And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I have faith; help thou my want of faith.' Do you not feel instinctively how much closer to the original this is, and how the living germ of a living faith—if as yet only a rudiment, 'faith even as a grain of mustard-seed'—is yet recognised by the loving Saviour as genuine so far as it goes, and capable, though bred in tears and storm, of springing up in this man's heart into a great tree of firm and steadfast conviction. The usual version, no doubt, gives an intelligible sense; but this germinal quality of faith, in its moral aspect—the gradual growing from less to more—is greatly obscured in the words 'belief' and 'unbelief.' And so you will find it, I think, in many other passages. It needs not be denied that faith implies a belief of some sort; but for all that faith is something different from belief, more personal, more inward, more, in short, of a moral quality; and there-



fore 'greater' in the kingdom of heaven than the acceptance of, or belief in, any 'Credo.'


5. In the epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 1) we are taught by many instances that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'; and St. Paul, in that famous chapter of 1 Corinthians (xiii. 13), places faith first among the three things that abide, the last and greatest of which is charity, or love. There is nothing different here from the view of faith presented to us in the gospels; for those who had been drawn in sincere faith to Christ by the stress of calamity could not fail also to hope for healing or other blessings from him, and would assuredly find, as their faith in him grew, that love went along with it, and was indeed a part of faith, practically not to be severed from it. But for us, who are called on to have faith in an unseen God, and an unseen Christ, the brief definition in Hebrews is at once more necessary, and more striking.

a world wholly bereft of faith ; and what a world it would be ! Even in the most simple business transactions, *credit* (which is simply faith embodied in a mercantile form) would be impossible ; suspicion and the fear of over-reaching would rule everywhere ; character, honesty, probity, self-restraint—all of which belong to the ‘things not seen’—would cease to have their normal influence, and universal bankruptcy could hardly fail to be the speedy result. Evidently, then, even in the lower sphere of mercantile business, gold and material profits—the ‘things that are seen’—cannot be all in all. Then, in the family life, ask yourselves for a moment—What would a family be, without mutual confidence and affection, without willing self-sacrifice ; in other words, without faith ? We may even have witnessed, in our varied experience, something like an approach to such a disaster ; but if so, what a lesson it has been as to the immeasur-



able value of the 'things not seen,' as compared with more material adjustments, even in this present world of ours; how much more, then, in that eternal world, where God and Christ shall be all in all! In national, civic, and other public concerns and enterprises, it has been maintained by some cynical philosophers that the rules and principles of private morality do not apply; that material advantages are alone to be sought after, and a modified Machiavelism (so far as the present age can tolerate it) is the only rule of diplomacy, and especially of international arrangements. Yet, even here, and now in the midst (1900) of a most sad and terrible war, have we not learned by experience within the last year, that the 'things not seen'—justice, loyalty, sympathy as between sovereign and people, courage and enthusiasm—ay, and even clemency and tenderness towards our fallen foes—all these, which may be called the fruits of faith in a sense

short of the highest religious aspect of it, have been evidently making for endurance, if not for eternity, in an empire greater than that of Rome or of Nineveh, upon which, it is said, 'the sun never sets'? Now, the faith that we are called on to repose in God, by our Lord Jesus Christ, is indeed greater than all these; but it is, more or less, akin to them all. We may venture to hope, then, that even in our experience of this present world, we have obtained some glimpses—as between man and man—of what our faith in God should be, and is intended to be. Where there is faith, there must of course be a belief—for 'he that cometh to God must believe that he is.' But, as another apostle has reminded us, mere belief goes but a small way towards the joy of faith; nay, 'the devils also believe, and tremble.' We can never, therefore, find salvation in a *credo*; and truth to say, these documents or symbols (as they were called



in the first three centuries of the Church) are in no way so constructed as to take the place of a real and living faith; much less, to claim for themselves (as the Athanasian creed does) the title of 'the Catholic faith.' These 'symbols,' as well as the numerous 'confessions' which followed them in later times, may, indeed, have great historical importance; but they have no hold upon the conscience, inasmuch as they deal only with conclusions reached through the intellect. They are, in almost every phrase of them, the record of strife and controversy; sometimes of bitter, and not seldom of violent and even unchristian strife, as the history of those troubled times amply demonstrates. What Jesus claims from us, on the other hand, is something at once less, and much greater, than this; less, in its intellectual aspect; far greater, in its moral and spiritual significance. For what he asks of us is no-thing less than the loving



devotion of our whole being, reaching out and aspiring, through him, to our common Father in heaven. But even if our faith is weak and uncertain as yet, we need not be discouraged thereby. As he did to the Roman centurion, to the Syro-Phenician woman, to the woman who was a sinner, even so will he do to us; he himself will work for us, and with us. 'He that cometh to me,' has he not said, 'I will in no wise cast out'? If we have faith even 'as a grain of mustard-seed,' so it be real, and living, and seminal; we need not be disheartened at its smallness, for it will grow. And even when all is done, and growth has taken place as far as our poor human nature will allow, we shall still have occasion to adopt for ourselves the humble but not despairing cry of the father of the epileptic child—'Lord, I have faith; help thou my want of faith.'

Which of us, and how many of us, who call Jesus our Lord

and Master, have a faith akin to this, be it little, or be it much? We know, at all events, both from his precept and his example, that he is ready and willing to receive us. 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' Listen, yet once more, to his invitation, how large and broad and generous it is; how utterly untrammelled, how free from all doubt or suspicion, how absolute in its all-embracing love: 'Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light' (Matt. xi. 28-30). No words of any preacher can enhance this glorious liberty which we have in Christ Jesus; no claim of authority on the part of any church can curtail it. 'Be not ye called Rabbi,' he has himself said, 'for one is your Master, even the Christ; and

## II


### HOPE

Rom. viii. 24.—‘We are saved by hope.’

AS compared with the importance and urgency claimed for *faith*, on the one hand, and for *love*, on the other, in the New Testament, it might almost seem as if *hope* is scarcely regarded as a duty, or as one of the distinguishing marks of the Christian character. Indeed, it would be difficult to show from the gospels alone, that our Lord himself attached any importance to hope, as a frame of mind to be cultivated; or that he ever enjoined or required it of his disciples, as he so very obviously and even urgently demanded of them an almost unbounded faith. It would not be too much to affirm that, according to the

record, we have no positive knowledge that the word 'hope' ever proceeded from the Saviour's lips, or had any place among those many parables and divine precepts which we associate directly with his earthly life. 'O woman, great is thy faith'—'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel'—'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace'—these are among the gracious and encouraging words which we are accustomed to consider as among the most vital and characteristic sayings of Jesus. But we have to come to St. Paul to learn, for the first time, that 'we are saved by hope.' And yet, if we only think of it, the whole life on earth of Jesus, the very temper and disposition of our Lord, as we read of him in the gospels; his absolute reliance upon, and confidence in, his Father; the habitual sunny outlook, as it were, the glad and gracious confidence of the Son of man amid the despairing and the sinful, and even when, as we

know, he himself had not where to lay his head; the entire absence of all fretfulness and complaining, of all bitterness, of all that in these modern days we call pessimism or cynicism, and in ordinary life down-heartedness or discouragement; the habitual cheerfulness, in short, of the Son of man, even under the most apparently distressing conditions; till, at the last, he gives himself up to God, fainting and tortured on the cross, with 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'—surely never before, and never since then, has such a lesson of hopefulness been read to the world; such a truly divine example of a human being, as St. Paul says, 'saved by hope.' And it is the very same lesson, in life and in death—often too, as in the supreme case of our Lord, acted but unspoken, a life-long 'song without words'—the lesson of *hope arising out of faith*, that has been taught us ever since, by every one of those apostles,




prophets, and martyrs, who have followed in the steps of the divine Lord and Master; he who came not to enjoy, but to suffer, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, not to rule but to serve, and so to 'give his life a ransom for many.'

1. Hopefulness, in fact, is in a very real sense the keynote of all Christian aspiration; the one ever-present distinction of the Christian religion and life from all that ever went before it (with one notable exception), and from much that has obtruded itself as 'philosophy,' even in these latter days. In pre-Christian times, indeed, we know how that vast oriental system of Buddhism which still counts more adherents, probably, among men than any other, even with many admirable moralities set forth in the way of precept, was pervaded throughout by a kind of philosophic pessimism; a hopelessness, in fact, which Schopenhauer in these later days has only adopted, and rendered into

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more modern terms of expression. The world is at the best, according to that great oriental philosophy, an illusion; at the worst, and as tested by human experience, a passing show of misery, disappointment, and vexation. It had been better for all of us not to have been born. Best now, for all of us, simply to cease to be. The only beatitude is *Nirvana*. The only escape from sorrow in this life is in such a constraint of all the faculties of enjoyment, as to make a kind of Nirvana even here and now, for all apparent sense of pleasure and satisfaction is *Maya*—illusion; and the only refuge from illusion is to cease to desire, and therefore to enjoy, this life. Such is, as we read, the ultimate philosophy of religion before Christ in the remoter East; and this, not even taking into account the lower expressions of the religious life; the innumerable idolatries, extending to devil-worship, of India and Tibet; the cruel sacrifices and mortifications



of the flesh which have abounded in practice, culminating in Fakeerism, widow-burning, the Juggernaut atrocities, and even systematic murder, or Thuggism. All these may be said to have sprung, more or less, out of the root of Buddhism, and it would not be difficult, unfortunately, to find their counterpart, approximately, in the deplorable abuses or lower forms of Christianity. But in Sakyamuni himself, *The Buddha*—i.e. the enlightened One—we have, as nearly as may be, the incarnation (as the Buddhists themselves would say) of the highest philosophy and religion known to them.

2. The Pagan idolatries, into the midst of which Christianity was launched at the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, had no such definite incarnation in a single historic figure, nor perhaps any such definite philosophical outcome, as in the case of the religion of the Buddha. But in a pregnant word of St. Paul, addressed




to those who had been 'Gentiles in the flesh,' and who under his teaching had accepted Christ as their Lord, we find a most striking appeal to their own inward consciousness, as to the change that had been wrought in their spiritual state. 'Wherefore, remember,' he says, 'that aforetime ye... were at that time (*i.e.* before their conversion) strangers from the covenants of the promise, *having no hope*, and without God in the world' (Eph. ii. 11, 12, R.V.). The world, as here spoken of (it may be remarked), is obviously different from what is implied in the perhaps more ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, where it is taken as the representative of the evil, as opposed to the good, principle among men. Here it is used in the well-known Greek sense of the *κόσμος*, the well-ordered universe, the world of order and law, as even the least religious man of science in the present day apprehends it.

To the best of the ancient

Greeks, no doubt, this world of order was in some sense a divine order, and implied also a supreme unity underlying the diversity of material phenomena. But most of the Gentile converts to whom St. Paul addressed this remark were at least open to the suggestion, that among their 'gods many and lords many' they had virtually lost sight of this divine order. Therefore they were, or had been, in a practical way, *ἄθεοι*, 'without God in the world'; *atheists* (for such is the actual word used here) not in the sense, perhaps, of formally denying the existence of a god or of gods; but in the far worse sense of living apart from the moral order, the *cosmos*. They had lost the key, as it were, to the divinely ordered universe, and were staggering blindly about in it doing according to their own lusts, and paying no regard whatever to the supreme and perfect Will which, nevertheless, was the one source of order in the *cosmos*. And thus, being without a God in the

world, they were also 'without a hope.' How could there be a hope, indeed, for the future, when the one eternal source of life, and light, and order had been by their own moral recklessness virtually shut out, as it were, from the souls of these men, living, as most of them probably did, entirely in and for the present? *No God, therefore no hope.* It was a daring appeal to the personal convictions of men for the most part only recently enlightened; but the apostle could not have made it, in the earnest way and with the practical purpose he had in view in this epistle, had he not felt sure that the conscience of every one of them would bear him out, in respect of the great change which had come over them in accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord, and the divine moral order of the world as a fact.


Not less daring, and even more pointed in detail, than the allusions in this chapter, is the tremendous indictment



by St. Paul against the heathen world generally, and especially at Rome, which we find in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. I do not dwell on it here, because it is not so clearly akin to the immediate subject of this address. But every one may judge for himself, how utterly impossible it would have been to have written down such a picture of practical atheism and its results, as we have in this chapter, without the assurance that every word of it would be felt to be true by those to whom it was addressed. They are without excuse, he tells them (ver. 20); because even without an express revelation, the invisible things of God are clearly disclosed through the visible creation; the divine order (as even a Greek philosopher might have expressed it) shines out brightly through the *cosmos*. But they would not practically recognise this manifest declaration of the eternal order 'through the things that are

for to-morrow we die' was almost ostentatiously the only practical rule of life to millions of the human race.

Of course there were many individual exceptions—noble hearts, high thoughts, true and devoted lives lived in the very midst of this stifling atmosphere of false religion and sterile philosophy. God never leaves himself without witness; the everlasting divine order remains, even though millions and millions of men strive to live in the negation of it, through ignorance and blindness, or in conscious resistance to it, as atheists in the *cosmos*. Even the great apostle who has left us this terrible indictment of the heathenism of his own day, tells us in the very next chapter of the Romans (ii. 14, 15, R.V.) that 'when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness



therewith,' St. Paul was as far as possible from the narrow-mindedness and bigotry of those ancient, or modern, sectarians who can see no good in men outside the limits of a church, fallible or infallible, holding by a dogmatic creed. He even holds up Gentiles, who by a sound natural instinct live in accordance with the moral law, as a living rebuke to Jews, a warning and an example to those of his own nation who fell short of the moral standard that ought to have been inspired in them by their national law, and their great national privilege that 'to them were entrusted the oracles of God.' He considered, as did also our Lord in many of his recorded utterances, that the exceptional position and privilege of the Jewish people would make rather for condemnation than for righteousness, before the all-seeing eye of God, if in their case the everlasting moral order, which was in no sense national or circum-

scribed by race or creed, should be wilfully neglected or deliberately set aside. 'For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly' is his final summing-up of an argument on this subject; 'neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God' (Rom. ii. 28, 29).

4. And yet St. Paul, who, as he himself tells us, was 'an Hebrew of the Hebrews,' would most assuredly have claimed for his race and people, had his argument led that way, the exclusive distinction in the history of the world at that time, of being a nation 'saved by hope.' Nay, I think he could even have added to the force of such an argument, had he been able to extend it to this present hour, through all the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem, the abominable persecutions of the Middle Ages, and the


long endurance under injustice, confiscation, and proscription (even, alas! and mostly, by professing Christians) of which the Jewish communities scattered throughout the world have been, and are even now, the object. Assyrian and Babylonian, Greek and Roman have passed away; but the Jew, though deprived of his country, and in his national isolation very often 'despised and rejected of men,' is still in the most absolute sense a member of a nation which, although insignificant in numbers, is as distinct from the surrounding peoples as ever it was in the days of David or of Solomon.

The cause of this unique phenomenon — this historic vitality and persistence of the Jewish people during thousands of years, and in the most apparently adverse circumstances — cannot be here indicated, with due regard to the limits of this discourse. But this may be said: That the Jew, even in his worst national aberrations




in the earlier days, and still more in the long years of exile and persecution, and more than ever in St. Paul's time under the dominion of Rome, had maintained, as his most prominent and unique national characteristic, an undying inextinguishable *hope*, as to the future of his race and country; a hope founded on faith in the one unchanging Jehovah, who had of old chosen and set apart Israel out of all the nations, and never would desert the people of his choice. This, indeed, is the very point of the apostle's appeal to the Gentile converts in the Epistle to the Ephesians; they were, he says, 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' and therefore 'without a hope, and without God in the world.'

The sublime faith in an eternal divine order, which was exactly what the heathen contemporaries of St. Paul had practically lost, is alike the theme of prophet and psalmist, and shines out in every age, and in every vicis-



situde of the history of the chosen people, as recorded in the Old Testament. In the darkest and most desolate time of the captivity, when the harps were hung upon the willows by the waters of Babylon, Jerusalem was still remembered, and Jehovah was alone looked to as the deliverer and the avenger. The most mournful and despairing of all the psalms in its opening (xxii.)—‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me’—breaks into a song of triumph long before its close, expressing the confident hope that ‘All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord. . . . For the kingdom is the Lord’s; and he is the ruler over the nations’ (vers. 27, 28). But as the ages went on, and the glories of David and Solomon receded into the distant past, the hope of Israel was projected more and more into the future, and the splendid vision gradually arose in prophecy of a king who was to come out of the race and lineage of David, and who


was to rule in righteousness and peace over all the nations, in the name of Jehovah. The beautiful description of this ideal prince in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah is probably well known to you all, and might pass for the indication of a kind of 'golden age,' such as the classical writers placed in the remote and unhistorical past. (See also chap. ii. 2-5.) But the vision is, in every point, definitely Jewish and national, and its seat and centre is always Mount Zion. 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' The remainder of the chapter points to a comparatively limited horizon, as it were; Ephraim and Judah, the Philistines, Edom and Moab are in the near view, and the ideal king is to 'set up an ensign for the nations, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth' (ver. 12), even from the comparatively remote Assyria



(ver. 16). In the later Isaiah (chap. lx. onwards), and in a very remarkable passage in Jeremiah (xxxi. 31 *seq.*), there are glimpses of a 'new covenant' founded upon a more universal knowledge of Jehovah; of a wider horizon, moreover, in which all the nations should flow into Zion, bringing the wealth of the whole known world as a willing tribute. 'The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel' (Isa. lx. 14). And this is to be a peaceful revolution. 'Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise' (ver. 18). 'Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever' (ver. 21). In a still later chapter (lx. 17) there is the glorious vision


of 'new heavens and a new earth'; a new Jerusalem also, created as 'a rejoicing and her people a joy.' Finally (chap. lxvi. 18 ff.) there is to be the gathering-in of 'all nations and tongues,' even 'to the isles afar off, that have not heard my name, neither seen my glory.' This is the highest point that is reached in the Old Testament as to the spiritual reign of the one God; the very culmination of the Messianic hope.

5. At the opening of the New Testament record, we find John the Baptist proclaiming in the wilderness of Judæa, 'Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt. iii. 2); a form of words which is exactly followed up by Jesus of Nazareth himself, in the very first stage of his ministry in Galilee: 'From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt. iv. 17); or, as we have it in Mark (i. 15), 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;



repent ye, and believe the gospel.' Whatever may have been the precise significance of this expression in the ears of an average Jew of that time, there can be little doubt that it was fraught with a reference to the undying hope of Israel—the speedy accomplishment of that continuous stream of prophecy which, from David on to Malachi, had seemed to beckon onwards towards a final and great deliverance—to a Messiah-King who was to make all things new, to redeem the chosen people from their subjection, and to establish, once for all, a visible and universal reign of Jehovah on the earth. But the roll of prophecy had been closed, at this time, for well-nigh four hundred years; and no such Messiah-King had appeared. On the contrary, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and now Roman conquerors had successively held the empire of the world; and the people of God, although since the Babylonian captivity they had never been, as a nation,

exiled, had been dwelling in their own land on sufferance, if not in complete subjection to the unhallowed power of kings who not only claimed temporal authority over them, but had even done despite to their most sacred laws, and on more than one occasion had plundered and desecrated the Temple itself. At this time, under the Roman power, they were living, probably, in greater peace and security than for many ages before; for it was the policy of the Roman state to protect foreign religions; and the Herodian kings, though not of the lineage of David, and withal as unlike as possible to the ideal Messiah-King, were, up to a certain point, a pledge to the Jewish nation of the intention of Rome to respect her national institutions. But the Roman tax-gatherer, the Roman law, and ultimately the Roman despotism, ruled everywhere; the people submitted grudgingly, and with hatred and contempt in their inmost heart; the Messianic



hope had never died out; on the contrary, all the evidence goes to show that it was never so much alive as now.

Into this state of silent, but probably intense expectancy, came the proclamation of John, that the kingdom of God (or of heaven) was indeed nigh at hand. The impression produced must have been profound and widespread; for it is recorded, both by Matthew and Mark, that all Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and all the region about Jordan, went to him for baptism; and it is added in St. Luke's gospel that 'the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not (chap. iii. 15).


6. In the address on 'faith' which preceded this one, it has been already remarked that in taking up the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven by John the Baptist, our Lord gave to the current expression, 'kingdom of God, or kingdom of





heaven,' a meaning all his own. This coming reign, or kingdom, which the general Jewish mind regarded as a revolution, was, according to Jesus, to be in no obvious sense revolutionary. It was to be a change, no doubt (as indeed the very word translated 'Repent'—employed both by John and Jesus—implies in the Greek); but a 'change of mind' (*μετάνοια*), not a change in the structure of society, or the external conditions of government. The kingdom of heaven was to come 'not with observation,' so that men should not be able to say 'Lo, here!' and 'Lo, there!' It was to be a silent, gradual, overwhelming change, indeed; but was to be carried out in the inmost recesses of the heart, after the manner of growth of the grain of mustard-seed, or the leaven hid in three measures of meal. We cannot doubt for a moment that our Lord knew very well that this was not the kind of revolution that was expected.



Were it possible to suppose otherwise, there is a very remarkable hint given us in a verse of St. Matthew's gospel (xi. 12) of 'violence' as being at the time an actual, or impending, result of the Messianic expectation: 'From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' The exact meaning is not, perhaps, perfectly clear; but taken in connection with a passage (not exactly parallel, indeed) in St. Luke's gospel (xvi. 16), and with the allusion in both to the 'prophets and the law' as having led up to the crisis here implied, it is probably correct to infer, that as a consequence of John the Baptist's proclamation, a revolution—possibly a bloody and violent revolution—was already 'in the air,' if not actually breaking out in force. Such a revolution would have been exactly in accord with the two famous prophecies of Daniel (ii. 44; vii. 13, 14), which, by all concurrent testi-



mony, were at this time prominent in the mind of all zealous Jews, and which could only have borne to them the interpretation of a sudden subversion of the Roman overlordship, and the setting-up of an everlasting dominion, directly by the God of heaven himself, to be established upon the ruins of the earthly kingdoms. But Jesus of Nazareth is, from first to last, wholly opposed, both in spirit and in act, to such revolutionary methods. He will be no party to the setting-up of an earthly kingdom, even when his own disciples—misapprehending his purpose—try to force him into a prominence corresponding with their own ideas of a great leader of men. He instructs them, on the contrary, to pay tribute to the Roman power; and when the question is formally raised by the Pharisees and the Herodians, with the very object 'to entangle him in his talk' (Matt. xxii. 15), he responds by the famous and unanswerable, but still difficult, distinc-



tion—‘Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ He adopts one of the hated and despised tax-gatherers (publicans) into the band of his immediate followers. He sits down with them freely at meals; he even offers himself to go to the house of Zacchæus the publican, as a particular mark of his favour. To the astonishment of his own most attached disciples, he consorts by preference with the poor, the erring, the afflicted, and those who are of no account in society. When the rich or powerful incline towards his teaching, he subjects them to tests which are too severe for their constancy; and to the wondering incredulity of his own followers, who ‘were exceedingly amazed,’ exclaiming—‘Who then can be saved?’—he replies without a trace of misgiving—‘With man this is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible’ (Matt. xx. 26). So far from trying to attract

observation, or to place himself at the head of a party, Jesus appears, at least in the earlier part of his ministry, to have used every endeavour to avoid publicity, and to have become known, as it were, in spite of himself (Matt. ix. 30, 31, and elsewhere). When John the Baptist in prison (xi. 2-6), evidently at a loss to understand this attitude of abstention on the part of one whose mission he had himself publicly announced, sends messengers to inquire, 'Art thou he that cometh (R.V.), or look we for another?' Jesus still declines to assume the rôle popularly assigned to the Messiah-King, and simply refers John to the works of beneficence that are being done, as those which declare the character of his mission. 'And blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me' (R.V.), he adds, as if by way of warning against the unauthorised use of his name as a cover for political agitation or revolt. It might almost

appear as if he had set himself to crush the rising hope of Israel, and not to encourage or direct it. And this attitude of reserve, and even of protest, as regards the popular watch-words connected with the coming of the kingdom, he maintained to the very end, before Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, who, even in delivering the innocent to his doom, acquitted him of all offence cognisable by the Roman law. 'My kingdom is not of this world,' he had said, in answer to a judicial question; 'if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence' (John xviii. 36). 'I find no fault in this man' was the real judgment of Pilate, even in delivering the captive into the hands of his envenomed accusers.

7. But although the kingdom of heaven was to be, in the most absolute sense of the words, a spiritual kingdom, it was, none the less, to be

the fulfilment of the Messianic hope. As has already been remarked, our Lord, though not in words declaring himself the hope of Israel, was in very deed carrying out, in his own person, the grandest anticipations both of prophet and psalmist. Nay, he was even exceeding the grandest of all these, in the true and only sense in which he taught the coming of the kingdom—the reign of the one supreme God over the hearts and lives of men. ‘Except your righteousness,’ he says in the Sermon on the Mount, ‘exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. v. 20). The doing of the will of God, not in outward observance and ceremonial, but from the heart, was the very keystone of that great sermon, and also the very guiding principle of the life of the Son of Man.

But there was one respect in which not only the words of Jesus, but still more the life and death of Jesus, were

a lesson of hope to all of us far exceeding in its significance all that ever went before. He taught us, alike by precept and example, to say 'Our Father.' The almost incalculable—nay, up to that time inconceivable—help to all human aspiration involved in this expression, is apt not to strike us as it ought to do, from the very fact of its having, in all these Christian ages, been so familiar as the opening word of what we distinctively call 'the Lord's Prayer.' But, up to the time of Jesus of Nazareth, it is impossible to show that the conception of the fatherhood of God, as Jesus gave it to us, and as he himself lived in the light of it, had ever been set forth, either by prophet or psalmist. God was indeed the father of Israel as a nation, and never would desert his chosen people. Jehovah had made his covenant with Abraham, and would surely abide by it, even unto the end, with all that were of the seed of Abraham. That was the




hope of Israel, and the hope of all true Israelites. But Jesus carried this confidence far beyond the bounds of a national aspiration. He lived, as a man amongst men, in the perpetual light of God's presence, and from the very first glimpse that we have of him (Luke ii. 49), at Jerusalem as a child, to the very last word upon the cross, we know that his Father was ever with him, and in the darkest hours of his conflict and agony was still the same eternal, almighty, and most loving Father, who at his baptism had acknowledged him as 'My well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' We must speak reverently here; for words are apt to convey either too much or too little in dealing with such mysteries; but may we not venture to say, with all reverence, that Jesus not only realised in his own person, but greatly transcended, the Messianic hope of prophecy; and that in calling upon all men to say 'Our Father,' he virtually made all



men able to become sons of God, not of course in the same high sense as Jesus is the Son of God; but potentially, and according to the measure of their faith in him, and in his and our Father? Thus—in the language of the Te Deum—Christ ‘opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers’; and in the still more explicit language of St. John’s gospel (i. 12, 13, R.V.), ‘As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood [*i.e.* not of the race of Abraham only], nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’

Thus Jesus more than fulfilled the hope of Israel, as to the coming of a kingdom of heaven for all men. But he was also under no illusions, either as to the early and complete realisation of that hope, or as to the path which had to be trodden towards its accomplishment. Immedi-


ately after the famous confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, we read that he disclosed to his disciples the awful, and to them incredible, fact that the Son of man whom they had just recognised as the Messiah and the Christ, by the lips of Peter, was about to tread the way, not of victory, as they all expected, but of humiliation, suffering, and death. 'From that time forth began Jesus' (Matt. xvi. 21) 'to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and raised again the third day.' And after the severe rebuke which followed on Peter's hasty repudiation of this sad prophecy, he proceeded to apply it not only to himself but to them. 'Then said Jesus unto His disciples' (ver. 24), 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it ;



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and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.' It is needless to point out how the Messianic hope, as they, and probably all their countrymen at this time, conceived it, was thus, as it were, dashed to the ground. But Jesus himself has no such misgivings. For him as for his disciples, the kingdom of God would surely come, and would remain. Not even the extremity of suffering in this world, not even a death on the cross, can disturb the eternal purpose. Inasmuch as God abides, and is our Father, there is for us an abiding hope beyond the grave; and, as to the way of attaining to it, we know now that Jesus is for us 'the way, the truth, and the life.' We have but to walk in his footsteps, and to cultivate his spirit, and take upon ourselves, as far as mortal frailty will permit, the lesson of his obedience; and the Father, who sustained him through all the way of the cross, even to the end, will also sustain

us. And so the hope of Israel is more than fulfilled, not to the nation, but to every individual child of God, through Christ — 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God' (Heb. xii. 2). Or, to use the later words of that same apostle Peter who, during the earthly life of his master, had shown himself at once so confident and so distrustful (1 Peter i. 3-5): 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.'



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Let us pray, then, that we may every one of us rise to the height of that glorious inheritance; and, if we in our earthly life have to tread in the way of the cross, that we may bear it in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; in whom we have an abiding hope, that when this house of our earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. Amen.

### III

#### LOVE

1 Cor. xiii. 13.—‘And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love, R.V.], these three; but the greatest of these is charity.’

WHEN Tunstall, Bishop of London, found it beyond his power to suppress the works of the early reformers in England, he applied to Sir Thomas More for a literary refutation of them, which, under the form of a ‘Dialogue,’ was published in 1528, with the approval, as it was supposed, of all the ‘powers that be.’ The chief, perhaps, of the pestilent and heretical books thus referred to was Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament, which, printed abroad in 1526, had been secretly imported into England, and, notwithstanding every kind of oppressive

severity, was being read by hundreds and thousands of persons in all ranks who well knew, moreover, the risk they ran in doing so; and that the penalty of death had been attached by Convocation to the introduction, or possession, or reading of such a dangerous volume. Tyndale was himself at this time an outcast from his native land—a truly noble enthusiast wandering from city to city, wherever he could best obtain facilities for his life's work. More, on the other hand, was at the very head of English scholars; a man of European reputation, of blameless and indeed noble character, and most winning presence, the bosom friend of Erasmus and Colet, and one of the most attractive and notable personages of his time. He had not yet replaced Wolsey as chancellor; but he was in favour alike with the court and with the church. The 'Dialogue,' published under these circumstances, was sure of an



immediate notoriety, and may well have seemed to most men to portend an easy triumph for the brilliant and legally trained man of the world over Tyndale, the obscure Cambridge scholar; as regards whom, however, even his great antagonist freely admitted that he was 'a man of right good living, studious, and well learned in Scripture.' Yet this lonely exile, distinguished only by his one perilous and almost impossible undertaking, of translating and circulating for the first time the New Testament, taken direct from the original Greek, and rendered into plain, simple, impressive English, has won far more than a dialectic victory. For the English New Testament of Tyndale is, in substance, and to a great extent also in form and style, the one we still use. Needless to say that it has influenced English thought and devotion, and even English literature, to an extent far beyond anything in the works of the great, and

in many respects admirable, chancellor. But the object of these remarks is to fix your attention on only one point in the argument. Sir Thomas More said, in general and controversial language, that Tyndale's version was incurably bad; that 'above a thousand texts in it were wrong and falsely translated'; and that it was 'clean contrary to the gospel of Christ.' And one of the instances he gives of this general condemnation—the only one that concerns us to-night—was that, in pursuance of his fixed habit of avoiding words and phrases the current sense of which had been determined by ecclesiastical usage, he had, in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians and elsewhere, employed the word 'love' as the translation of the Greek word *agapé*; thereby setting aside the more usual, conventional, and therefore orthodox and proper word 'charity,' adopted from the Latin of the Vulgate. This was an offence

in the eyes of Sir Thomas More, not, perhaps, so great in degree, but the same in kind as many others, insomuch that he said it would be impossible to correct and amend Tyndale's translation, for 'it is as easy to weave a new web of cloth as to sew up every hole in a net.'

Now, the point with which we are chiefly concerned in the present discourse is, that after nearly three centuries during which the 'Authorised Version' of 1611, containing the translation of the Greek word *agapé* by 'charity' in this chapter, has held the field, the Revisers of the nineteenth century have—and in all probability finally—reversed the judgment of Sir Thomas More, and affirmed the original view of Tyndale, that 'love' is the only word which fully and adequately conveys, in the English tongue, the whole force, tenderness, and simplicity of the greatest of Christian graces.

1. It may, perhaps, appear to some of you that all this is a

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matter of very minor importance, in relation to what has been announced as the main subject of this discourse. It is, you will say, a question of words, at the most; and whether we follow the Revised or the Authorised Version is a mere detail, which does not concern the ordinary Bible reader. It may be so, and yet, before I have finished, I hope it will be apparent to you that this is much more than a question of words; and that Tyndale's genuine instinct for reaching the very heart of the matter led him aright; although it is, to say the least, not improbable that neither he nor his great antagonist had seriously considered the nature of the difficulties which beset the early Latin translators of the New Testament, in finding an appropriate word for *agapé* or love, as expressing the high sphere of emotion that Christianity had brought into being. 'Amor' was, of course, the familiar and (in a sense) obvious word to be used for

'love'; but it was a deeply tainted word, so saturated with impurity as to be wholly unfit, according to the mind of the translators, for the sacred page. It seemed as if gods and men had conspired together, in the heathen world, to limit the use of the word 'amor' to the expression of a mere animal instinct, and to defile it with all the almost unspeakable corruption which we find, alike in art, in literature, and in practice, under the Roman emperors. In this extremity the word *caritas* (literally *dearness*) suggested itself as an appropriate, or at least an unobjectionable word, conveying whatever there was of human love at its best, at least without any element of a baser kind to debar its employment as signifying God's love to man, or man's love to God. This, therefore, was the word adopted in the Vulgate: not without a certain strain and grammatical inconvenience, which need not be dwelt

upon here, to express in the New Testament the love or warm attachment which also carries the sense of something valued, as at a high price. And thus, too, it came to stand, not always appropriately, for 'charity' in the comparatively modern sense of almsgiving, or material donations of value; and this, even in the face of that most pregnant antithesis of the great apostle — 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'

But this adoption of the Latin word 'caritas' as the interpretation of *agapé* only carries us one step further back. For *agapé* itself is a word with a history—and a history which, if not so clearly defined, at least reproduces to some extent the same difficulties which the Latin translators of the fourth century attempted to solve with the word 'caritas.' *Agapé* is not, in fact, as a noun indicating love, known to classical Greek

at all; and all the words which are so known as being in common use before Christ were in one way or another inadequate, or otherwise unfitted, to express the high and pure range of emotion characteristic of the 'love that is in Christ Jesus.' It is not too much to say that a new word—or at least a very unaccustomed word—had to be specially adapted for this purpose; and that word was *agapé*. The thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, indeed, could not have been written as we now have it, in Greek, had not a previous usage of some kind prepared the way by the Christian understanding, and the employment for Christian purposes, of this most sublime, and also beautifully human, word.

2. Where, then, are we to look for the inspiration that breathed into the idea of 'love' that intense spirituality—that perfect purity and almost infinite longing and desire, which demanded almost a new word to meet a new

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conception, as much in advance of all that the heathen world knew, as the gospel of St. John transcends all the Greek philosophies? The answer to this question is to be found, at least in the first instance, in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, as reported to us in that very gospel—the spiritual gospel, as it has been well called—of the beloved apostle; to the effect that ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved’ (John iii. 16, 17).


Were ever such words as these spoken to mortal ears before the Saviour thus spoke to Nicodemus? Let us consider this point for a moment. You will find it is worthy of both deep and reverent consideration. For here we have the very mystery of redemption set



forth, so far as we know, for the first time by our Lord himself to one who, being a 'Master in Israel,' and as yet only half convinced, came to him by night for fear of the Jews, to learn of this new and wondrous teacher in what special way God might be said to be with him. 'God so loved the world.' We, indeed, seem to know all about the divine Father's love for us. We have heard from our childhood how the good shepherd went over the mountains to reclaim the lost sheep; how the loving father of the prodigal saw him, 'when he was yet a great way off, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' But no such vision of good, no such thought of the eternal Father's love for men, had ever, it is safe to say, entered into the mind of Nicodemus. Nay, it is equally safe to say, that no such glorious vision of the transcendent love of God, radiating outwards, as it were, from the throne, 'to

seek and to save that which was lost,' had ever entered the mind either of Jewish rabbi, or of Greek philosopher, until Christ came to reveal it in his own person to us. 'God so loved the world.' Think of the numberless souls even in this sinful world that have, only through Jesus Christ, lived in the light of this all-pervading divine love; have made it their own, by self-sacrifice and high resolve; have gone out, in the name of Christ and his redeeming love, into all the world, not for any personal benefit or advantage, but solely (as St. Paul said, Rom. v. 5), 'because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to us.' Then think of the results, in missions, schools, charities, hospitals; think of this love as a silent but ever-present influence between man and man, 'sweetening the breath of society' (as Chalmers well said); think of the love of God, from age to age, and often, alas! in our own,

despite (as it were) having widened the horizon of liberty and extinguished the fires of persecution in all the most advanced and Christian nations; and we may surely admit to ourselves that the love of God in Christ Jesus has actually been a redeeming power, demonstrably present throughout all these centuries, although only too often marred, and deformed, and even all but lost in history, owing to our human weakness, and error, and sin. Yes; and what is perhaps more than all this, for each one of us—‘God so loved the world,’ that by our coming to know him as our Father, through Christ Jesus, we have a new way of access into the holiest in our individual prayer to him, crying, Abba, Father. ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’ For here we have the very human passion for which the Latin translators of the fourth century could hardly find a decent or presentable word, actually lifted into the



heavenly places, and become (like mercy, which is the fruit of it) 'the attribute of God himself.' Nay, more than the attribute; for so deeply was the impression of this divine love rooted in the mind of the apostle John, that in his first epistle general, and when the living converse with his Master had long ceased, he could revert to the idea in a yet more developed form. 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him' (1 John iv. 16).

3. Love, therefore, from the Christian point of view, is not only an attribute, but is of the very essences of the divinity. And thus it becomes not only the ground of redemption, as in the words spoken to Nicodemus, but of every possible approach which we, frail creatures of a day, though bearing 'the image of God,' can make towards the source of our being, and of all being. And thus a very human feeling, often a frail and deceitful, even sinful passion in us, shared by us, too, with the


brute creation, is lifted up on high, and placed among the things that 'abide.' Love, to the apostle John, is the golden key that opens all mysteries. 'Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another' (1 John iv. 7, 8, 11). So that the very ground of our 'charity' towards men, in the sense we read in the epistle to the Corinthians (but with the same word, *agapé*, in both cases), is that very love of God, which in Jesus Christ was made manifest to all men, for the salvation of a world which neither knew God, nor loved him. 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John iv. 10).

It can surely not be needful, in an audience like this, to point out more in detail how

our Lord Jesus Christ was not only the supreme teacher of this love of God to man, but also one who lived constantly in the very atmosphere and light of it. The great parable of the prodigal son, of the lost sheep, the imperishable words in which he revealed the fatherhood of God to us; the innumerable cross-lights which he threw upon our duty to our neighbour, as arising from this; the duty, for instance, of being kind and loving even to our enemies, even to the unthankful and the evil, as God makes his sun to shine alike upon the evil and the good; all these are only parts of the revelation that came to us in the very person of Christ dwelling on this earth; in his life and in his death; in his many works of beneficence; in his ever-abounding sympathy with the weak, the poor, the erring, the afflicted; in his patience under the 'contradiction of sinners'; in the very last words which came from his lips on the cruel

cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' What life was ever before lived upon the earth, to be compared with this high, and holy, and most loving human life? Who, before Jesus, can be said to have lifted up the life of man, to place it among the eternities by conjoining for ever the love of man with the love of the eternal Father for man, in the person of his Son? Thus, at last, we have come to know that our Lord Jesus Christ is not only for us the great teacher and preacher of love; but that he is indeed for us, in this as in all else, 'the way, the truth, and the life.' Faith, hope, and love met in him, as never before in man, abiding to the end; and for him, as for us, we may well say with St. Paul, 'the greatest of these three is love.'

4. Now, observe, that the very conception of love, in this large and comprehensive sense of it, is only from God. God *is* love; he is, therefore, the source and the




centre of all love, human as well as divine. Every act of God originates in his own being, which is love; creation and redemption alike, all the laws of Nature as well as of Providence, all that makes an orderly world—a *cosmos* (as explained in the preceding discourse), is an act of love, as well as are the more unseen and spiritual acts by which, as our heavenly Father, he draws us to himself, and speaks to us in the quiet of our own souls. The great Christian poet, Dante, in the very last line of his *Paradise*, speaks of the love that moves the sun and the planets being the same that rules his own desire and will. Contrast this—or contrast the gospel and epistle of St. John—with the great poem of Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, which at about half a century before Christ came was perhaps the most outstanding, and certainly the most lofty and sustained, of all the efforts of the ancient world to read the riddle of the uni-




there is nothing for it but to represent the very atoms, or elemental particles, which form our bodies, and all other bodies throughout the universe, as rushing together, and held together by certain affinities, inherent in each particle, which poetic insight interprets as 'love.' Thus the human emotion which St. John and Dante alike exalt to the highest place—for 'God is love,' and in love rules and maintains all things—becomes in the great philosophical poem of Lucretius merely the contrivance for getting the elemental particles of the universe into their proper places, without the help of a god at all! I need not enlarge on this contrast: it speaks for itself.

5. But, to return to the Christian idea of *agapé*. The love which has its very source and centre in God—which, in fact, *is* God — is also, in a very high, indeed the highest, sense, the love of man to man, as made in the image of God. 'We love him' (God), says St.



John, 'because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also' (1 John iv. 19-21). It follows, that even the frailest and least abiding forms of human affection, in so far as they are based upon, and in conscious accord with, the love and the will of God, are consecrated and raised up thereby into that higher sphere, in which the eternal Father rules all his children in love. The love of an earthly father or mother for their child; the love, indeed, of husband and wife, as the source of the well-ordered family life; the love of kindred, the love of country and of race; all the various impulses by which man is drawn to comfort, help, soothe, or serve his fellows—that is, to show his love for them—are, in very truth, manifesta-

tions in our mortal flesh of the abiding and eternal love of our heavenly Father, just in the same sense, though in a lower degree, as that supreme revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, whereby 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And thus we may feel sure that, just because it is a part of God's love, no act of love, however small, on our part is, or ever can be, lost. *Agapé*, in the words of our text, is among the things that *abide*, as surely and as long as God himself abides. And, among the three things so abiding—Faith, Hope, Love—the last of the three is the greatest; because it not only begins in God, and returns to him, but is of his very essence; for 'God is Love.' Indeed, it is not at all an exaggeration with Henry Drummond, in that exquisite tract of his, which every one of you should read and carefully consider, to call 'Love,' in the sense of



it we have now been explaining—‘The Greatest Thing in the World.’

I will close this discourse with a few stanzas from a very noble poem by the late Archbishop Trench, which may not be so familiar to you as Henry Drummond’s address, but is not less an admirable expression of the same idea. It is called

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I say to thee, do thou repeat  
To the first man thou mayest meet,  
In lane, highway, or open street—

That he and we and all men move  
Under a canopy of love,  
As broad as the blue sky above ;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain  
And anguish, all are shadows vain,  
That death itself shall not remain ;

And we, on divers shores now cast,  
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,  
All in our Father’s house at last.

And ere thou leave him, say thou this,  
Yet one word more—they only miss  
The winning of that final bliss

Who will not count it true, that Love,  
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,  
And that in it we live and move.

Eternal Father, the God  
and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, we thank thee that thou hast indeed created man in thine own image; to the end that even in our human weakness and frailty we may in some measure understand thy great love for us. Thou hast created all things, and canst not hate anything that thou hast made. But it is only thy rational creatures who are privileged to cry unto thee, Abba, Father. Thou makest thy sun to rise alike upon the evil and the good, and sendest thy rain on the just and on the unjust. But it is only we who, being taught of Jesus, can rightly apprehend that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' We therefore venture to approach thee, O our Father, even under the deep sense of our own unworthiness, in humble prayer that to us, to every one of us here present, this glorious privilege may be freely given, of being made sons of God in Christ Jesus;

and that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. Thou, O God, art the only fountain and source of all love, human and divine ; the love of family and kindred, the love of country, the bonds of affection which bind us to our brethren of the human race far and near, are alike centred in thee ; and without thee it is impossible for us to feel aright towards any of thy creatures. We love thee, because thou hast first loved us. Therefore we beseech thee, O our God and Father, that we may be ever more and more conscious partakers in thy great love ; that we may abide in thy love, even as the Lord Jesus abode, and now abides, in thy love. And to this end may each of us strive to purify himself, even as Christ is pure ; to devote ourselves, our hearts, our lives, more and more to the things that make for eternity, the only things that abide ; to faith, and hope, and love which is the greatest of them all ;

because thou, O Lord, abidest for ever ; and love is of thy essence. Grant unto us, therefore, thine erring and sinful children, but still thy children, to look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; and so to abide in thy love for evermore. Amen.

#### IV

#### 'ΑΓΑΠΗ (LOVE)


An Address to the White Cross Society of Edinburgh University ; published by the Society in 1890.

When I was applied to, on behalf of your White Cross Society, to give an address on behalf of the principles they have set before them, I felt that it was one of those duties which, although a delicate one, and in some respects a difficult one, was at the same time an obligatory one ; for when I called to mind the objects of this movement, as they are admirably stated in the five resolutions I hold in my hand, I felt I could not for a moment hesitate—that it was simply an act of duty to place myself at the disposal of your officers in this Society. The objects of the movement are —‘The obligation of each to




treat all women with respect, and to endeavour to protect them from wrong and degradation'; 'To endeavour to put down all indecent language and coarse jests'; 'To maintain the law of purity as equally binding upon men and women'; 'To endeavour to spread these principles among my companions'; and 'To try to help my younger brothers to use every possible means to fulfil the command, "Keep thyself pure."' I do not think there is any man who has had the experience of over sixty years of life but must feel that every one of these objects is of the last degree of importance, and that with all young men it may be the turning of the balance as between good or evil in everything else, whether these objects are consistently aimed at from the beginning; and therefore it is with a strong sense of obligation and duty that I am here before you to-night.

I would in the first instance desire you to note a fact—for it is simply a fact, and not at all a



matter for controversy, or even discussion — that Christianity alone of all religions and of all philosophies of life has created for us a word in which pure human *love* can be expressed without any kind of double meaning (*double entendre*, as they say across the Channel when anything naughty is intended); I mean *love* as the attraction between *souls*, without any reference to its baser, or at least more earthly correlative, the physical attraction between *bodies*; and this, even when it of necessity includes or comprehends the sexual relation of man and wife, the purest of all the relations into which the bodily element enters. I say that Christianity alone has created for us the very form of language in which we can now speak of love without any ambiguities at all in this sense. Notwithstanding some great authorities to the contrary, I hold that the love of the sexes, at least in its best form, is in no way condemned or even disparaged in the Gospel; but

that it is lifted up into a higher region, a higher atmosphere, as it were, by being transfused with the absolutely Christian element of *ἀγάπη*; and in the very gospels themselves (or rather, in the one gospel of St. John, and in his first epistle and those of St. Paul) we can actually observe this glorious word crystallising, as it were, out of the confusions of the Greek language as bearing upon desire, longing, affection for things below as well as things above, till it reaches its culminating sense and perfected representation as being not only the 'end of the commandment' and the 'fulfilling of the law,' but as being of the very essence of all religion whatever. For this, and nothing less than this, if you consider it carefully, is the very inner meaning of that glorious word of St. John that 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him' (1 John iv. 16). God, in other words, not only loves and must love for evermore, but *is* love; *ἀγάπη* is of the very



essence of the Eternal. Thus *ἀγάπη* embraces in one view both heaven and earth, reaching out alike from God to man and from man to God. To attain to this sublime conception—for it is an absolutely sublime conception—the word and the thought had to be developed simultaneously, and both of them alike were non-existent, or only dimly apprehended, before Christ Jesus came ; therefore it ought not to surprise us, though in point of fact it does surprise us, to find that as a mere question of words the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians and the gospel and epistles of St. John absolutely could not have been written in Greek, as we now have them, at any age of the world before that at which they were written ; and this, for want of the word *ἀγάπη* and the corresponding idea which that word represents ; the word occurring not at all in any classical Greek writer, and only once in Matthew and Luke. You can thus see in the New Testament itself,

that the word is getting filled out with a new conception—the word and the thought are both growing up. The idea is there, and the word comes to meet the idea, and they both grow together. But up to that time neither the idea nor the word seem to have been sufficiently current to require expression at all.

Consider, now, what this implies. *Love*, to the whole ancient heathen world before Christ, was a word (as, indeed, it is now with all worldly people) more of evil than of good reputation. Associated in the old mythologies with Venus and Cupid, as well as with a host of tales both of gods and men which carried shame upon the face of them, *amor* took on a colour only too readily from the baser forms of earthly passion. Its spiritual meaning, if it ever had any, was hopelessly lost, or had drifted away into the clouds of such atomic philosophies as that of Lucretius, where it appears as the animating principle of the only


and too often desecrated the whole course of the lighter literature (the *belles lettres* so-called), down to the present day. This degraded view of love has remained in Italy, Spain, France — in all the countries specially connected by language with the ancient world—even now the prevailing one; so that one of the most kindly of our recent French critics has claimed for his countrymen (in a half-humorous sense, it is true, but apparently with conviction) to have a kind of appreciation of the word 'amour' which is denied to the insular 'John Bull,' with his more orderly domestic life and his colder temperament. It is to French novels and French plays, I suppose, that we must go to learn the 'art of love' in this nineteenth century of ours, in the same spirit in which Ovid taught it in the age immediately before Christ. Love, in short, if it ever had any higher acceptance at all in the minds of men, was in constant danger

the very word which represented Christian love should be created anew, as it were (just as the Christian himself was to become *καὶνὴ κτίσις*—a new creation), so as to be raised to the *em̐pyrean*, and to become fit to be spoken in the presence of God and of his well-beloved Son. This word was *ἀγάπη*, which, as I have said before, was a word unknown to all Greek classical literature before the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> The verb *ἀγαπάω* was known, but not *ἀγάπη* (except in a few places in the Septuagint; see Cant. v. 6; viii. 6, 7, etc.); and such was its essential nobleness, its perfectly radiant purity, in the mould into which it was cast by St. Paul and St. John, that the Latin translators of the New Testament had absolutely no means of render-

<sup>1</sup> See, on the whole subject of this word and its renderings, the Appendix at the close of this address. A very interesting and difficult subject, which I have not ventured to discuss, is as to what was the word (probably Aramaic) actually employed by Jesus as the counterpart of *ἀγάπη*, and its implications in the Old Testament literature.

too severe), we may judge what motives probably influenced the translators of the New Testament when they introduced into their Latin version the word *caritas* (dearness), as a very imperfect rendering of the Greek word ἀγάπη, but still the only one open to the authors of the Vulgate. That is, surely, one of the most curious facts in the history of the language of the New Testament; that a Greek word unknown in this sense to all classical antiquity had to be employed, and if not then invented, had to be brought into current usage, in order to express the highest, because the only Christian, emotion of *love*. Have I not reason, then, in saying that Christianity alone can supply the influence and the power necessary to keep a young man pure? Sir William Muir<sup>1</sup> knows how it is in Mohammedan countries. Buddhism,

<sup>1</sup> Principal of the University of Edinburgh, who was in the chair on the occasion of this address. He is the author of a life of Mohammed, and a very well-known Oriental scholar.





perhaps, in its original form, had somewhat of the higher influence, but it had this out of a purely ascetic principle. No religion that I know of, except Christianity, has ever thus connected human love with divine, and for ever made holy, or sanctified, every form of human love that is in itself worthy and pure, even when it includes the element of sex. Is there any form of religion or of social organisation, for example, that has sanctified the domestic relation—the principle of the family and the home as connected with the sexual relation—in the way that Christianity has done? It is for us to see that we do not lose the benefits of this immensely grand institution, an institution which has directly grown out of Christianity, and has all its finest fruits as the direct teaching of Christianity.


Now, if we want to see where we are to find our model, to whom can we look first, but to the head of Christianity—Jesus Christ our Lord?



of his parents—not rebellious, not even standing aloof, not presuming upon his high position or upon the forecasts of his future but just behaving like an ordinary simple child. Again, we see him upon the cross or before his going to the cross consigning his mother to the care of the beloved disciple. We see him careful for all, but especially for her. We see him brought into contact with womanhood at various times and places; and from his attendance at the marriage in Cana, we know he did not frown upon marriage, and did not suppose that those who kept apart from domestic life and duty were thereby higher in the scale of spiritual perfection than those who entered into it. 'John came neither eating nor drinking; the Son of man came eating and drinking.' So it might have been said that John may have frowned upon marriage, but the Son of man entered into the festivities and social arrangements which in his day, as in ours, give expression to


the joy and goodwill that attend a marriage. So much we know. All else is hidden from us. We can even see that not only was it a moral impossibility for our Lord to become an example for us of our everyday domestic life, but that, from the human aspect of it, even a too close association with the opposite sex might have roused a kind of suspicion unfavourable to his claims—might have in a certain sense destroyed, or at least greatly damaged, his influence at that particular time. We know, for instance, that when he stopped at the well to speak to the woman of Samaria, the disciples, when they came up, marvelled—not, as it is written in our version, that he spoke to *the* woman, but—that he spoke to *a* woman. It was his speaking to *a* woman that struck them with a feeling of incongruity and wonder. It was not according to the conventions, according to the proprieties, that a great Rabbi should step aside and speak familiarly to a woman. Nay,

was it not also (or might it not in their opinion have been) scandalous? Was it not open to a possible suspicion, that he should have remained alone with a woman so long, and should have taken up his time with her, and interested himself in her affairs; and this, too, a woman who (as appears from the conversation itself) was of no very exalted character? We can easily see many reasons why much converse with women, in the ordinary sense of the term, would have ruined the influence of early Christianity according to the prejudices of the day. At all events, we know that his own disciples regarded it as beneath him to speak familiarly to a woman. Yet Jesus Christ does not enter personally into these feelings. He condescends to women, or rather, I should say, he speaks easily and naturally to women without condescension. He does not allow them to feel that he is looking down upon them as from a higher platform, or condescending to the



weakness of their sex. We do not know of the most chivalrous man in the Middle Ages, or the greatest saint the church, having used such freedom in addressing women, as our Lord in that conversation with the woman of Samaria, with Martha and Mary, and many others. Now this matter is pressed home upon my mind very much in many parts of the New Testament, but in no part, I think, so much as in the few verses I am now going to read to you. They are familiar to all of you, but still a fresh impression is valuable, and we cannot do wrong in reading them again:—(Luke vii. 36) ‘And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner’—(better, perhaps, which was a sinner in the city, a woman of the town, as we say)—‘when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster-


box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet'—(*οὗτος, this person*—mark the impress of *hauteur*—he had invited Jesus to dinner, but Jesus still was to him 'this person')—'would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he



forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many' (not *are*, but) '*have been* forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'

Now I am not here as a clergyman, and I am not going

to make an exposition, still less a sermon, on this passage ; but I want just to suggest to you one little thought about it which may very possibly not have occurred to a great many of you in reading this very beautiful, touching, and exquisitely pure narrative, which one of the greatest fathers and doctors of the Church said could only be read with tears, and not with argument. Our Lord says, 'Her sins, which are many, have been forgiven ; *for she loved much.*' Now, just fancy any ordinary Frenchman, or indeed any man who thinks it a fine specimen of characteristic national humour to say of us that no mere Englishman can understand the full meaning of the word *amour*, dealing with a matter like this in any ordinary conversation, and in the ordinary course of what the French themselves call, quite untranslatably, *persiflage*. Or, suppose a pure-minded man, in any age of the world, standing beside a woman who was notoriously a woman of





doubtful reputation, and saying, 'Your sins are forgiven, for you have loved much.' What a telling rejoinder would come from the 'man in the street.' 'Yes,' he would say, 'far too much; not wisely, but too well, and yet not well.' You can imagine the sort of thing I mean; the cant of the worldling in the presence of a purity which is a practical rebuke to him. Would not all sorts of jests and gibes have been apt enough to become current on such a theme as this in the days of Martial, for example, or Lucian, in the ancient world, or of Voltaire in the modern—Voltaire, who has converted even the noble story of Joan of Arc into an epic of filth? And yet not Voltaire, nor yet the most irreverently-minded atheist that was ever begotten out of the French Revolution, I believe, has ever thought of smirching the splendid purity of that exquisite interview of our Lord with the woman who was a sinner in that Syrian town. Such is the power of *perfect purity*; it can overawe,

or overcome (let us say for the credit of human nature) evil with good, so that not even the most shameless profligate shall find an excuse or an opening for scandal in anything that is said or done in the name of *ἀγάπη*. Now I want you to think for a little. Which of the two will you have—you who are still young, and, as I hope, pure men—which will you choose for your own, for a lifelong possession, I mean (to say nothing about another and a better life in heaven): shall it be the *ἀγάπη* of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the *amour* of this Frenchman, who thinks it such a grand, superfine national characteristic, that he humorously suggests that no mere Englishman can apprehend it as his countrymen do? I wish to God that none of us could apprehend it in that French sense; and, on the other hand, I would that every man of us here could rise to-day to the height of purity and, I would add, of true manliness, that we could dare to

say to any woman under these circumstances what Christ—in Palestine, and amid Oriental surroundings and associations, a Rabbi who, as his own disciples thought, ought never to have spoken to a woman at all—spoke by way of encouragement to this erring sister, who testified by her tears of humiliation her great love for himself. I say that this is a noble example of unconscious purity, and of the highest and holiest manhood. That is the ideal at which we ought to aim, that you and I should become so pure that we could even speak to a woman of the most degraded class, and yet say nothing to her but what she herself and everybody around would understand as impossible to have any reference except to the nobilities of her character. If any one of us could dare to say to a woman of the town, 'Yes, you have loved much; you will be forgiven on that account'—if we could dare to say it in the spirit it was said

rounds him, were it only for a little while ; and if he can just get a little taste of it and then draw back in good time, and so come well out of it in a reasonable way (*se ranger*, as these same French have it), and then settle into a good, ordinary, jog-trot, reasonably faithful husband, that is the best (from the world's point of view) that can be expected. Such is the outcome, I believe, of French *amour*, and its natural and all but inevitable sequel the *mariage de convenance*, depicted for us by Mr. Orchardson so faithfully and so nobly in a couple of scenes of a domestic drama, which it is scarcely possible to look at with undimmed eyes. Gentlemen, do not you be deceived with the plausible representation that a little—only a little—necessary impurity in a young man's career is a breach that is very easily repaired afterwards. 'Sowing wild oats' is a bad business at the best, and doing so deliberately and on system is not only not the best that can be

expected, but pretty nearly the worst. It is so morally, I need not say; but it is also the worst prudentially, because the man that goes into impurity with that delusion in his mind is almost sure to be sooner or later captured by the pleasures of sense, and thus go much further than he intended to go. I would say, accordingly, to you and to all young men, with all the earnestness of a man who does not claim any more sinlessness than any of the rest of you, Do not give in to the worldly idea of *amour*, or of mainly sensual, even if romantic and chivalrous, love. Cultivate instead the Christian idea of *ἀγάπη*, and let it absorb and completely take into itself the other, so that you will look forward, from the very first, to the domestic relation—to that and that alone—as the kind of connection with the opposite sex which Christ himself sanctioned at the marriage in Cana of Galilee; and thus, by keeping before you a high and a pure ideal, resolve that you


offences—of impurity among the rest. It aims at nothing less than changing the whole inner nature of man, not merely the outward acts. It seeks to purify the whole nature, and so to render those acts which are overt breaches of human law or breaches of divine law impossible by purifying the heart. That is what you must all aim at if you are to be pure in the White Cross sense of the word,—nothing short of that will do, you must be pure from the heart outwards. No doubt, when the Sermon on the Mount tells us that 'he who looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,' it looks very hard. How are you to suppress altogether those physiological stimuli that are in every man? I believe Christ would have admitted that the physiological part of them to a certain extent cannot be suppressed, — that is to say, the desire must be there,—and that the stimulus—the animal

stimulus—must exist; but he practically declared, by example as well as by precept, and every Christian must hold, that it is possible to subject this impulse to the rule of law—to the rule of reason and moral order—so that you shall preserve and keep it for the only proper indulgence in the life of the family, where, as he said, ‘God made them male and female,’ to keep up to the end of time the figure of Adam and Eve,—a pure, because a faithful, association of the sexes, subject in all things to the law of ἀγάπη. This is what the Frenchman I spoke of, with his *amour* as a ruling principle, upsetting every other consideration that stands in the way, cannot or will not understand; and therefore he turns round upon the Englishman and accuses him of coldness and indifference in the pursuit of the *grande passion*. None the less, I am deeply persuaded that any man who has the power in the least of looking forward, and who knows or can enter into

the feelings that he would like to have as the father of a family, will early come to feel and to know that the best preparation for that is continence in early youth. If you can in early youth subdue the unbridled lust, and preserve for their proper purpose—of rearing a family—those instincts which have been implanted in you physiologically, you are fulfilling the precepts of Christ even to the uttermost letter of the Sermon on the Mount.

I believe I have spoken almost as long as I have any right to do, but I had noted a few things more.

A pure theory of marriage, as the New Testament puts it, is 'a male and a female, they twain to be one flesh.' I believe that is strictly in accordance with physiology as well as with Christianity,—that is, it is in accordance with the best health of the body as well as of the spirit,—with the best treatment, in short, of the entire human nature. I won't appeal on






this subject to Jesus Christ again. We are putting it now on a somewhat lower ground, but still not essentially different. I will appeal to an earthly—some would say a very earthly—authority, Robert Burns. Robert Burns was a man, surely, of like passions with ourselves, stained with errors, and not a few deplorable faults and vices, which no one saw more clearly than he himself did at times; but, like the woman 'who was a sinner' in Christ's interview, he may be in the same sense held to be forgiven, for he 'loved much'—loved in the higher as well as in the lower sense of the word; and among the men that he loved in the higher sense was a certain 'young friend,' to whom he once wrote an epistle, and in that epistle there comes in this verse. It has always struck me as, coming from Robert Burns, a singularly pathetic and touching verse. He says—


The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,  
Luxuriantly indulge it;  
But never tempt th' illicit rove,  
Tho' naething should divulge it;

I waive the quantum o' the sin,  
The hazard o' concealin';  
But, och ! it hardens a' within,  
And petrifies the feelin'!


That was Robert Burns's own personal 'Advice to a Young Friend,' founded on experience in his saner moments, when he felt that he was trying to reach the higher ideal for the sake of this young man. Let that be your ideal too; it is not a whit different from the Sermon on the Mount, though it proceeds from a very different authority. Surely you could not easily find any one that had more experience of the other side of the question. 'It petrifies the feeling, it hardens all within.' *Experto crede*; here you have, at least, the living, perfectly genuine testimony of Robert Burns. Every kind of indulgence of an illicit character, that is not at once both physiological and moral, 'hardens a' within, and petrifies the feelin',—is injurious to a man to the extent of searing his conscience and disturbing the course of his higher affections,—unfits him therefore for the



nobler life,—disqualifies him, so far, for those pure domestic relations which are moulded upon and ennobled by the Christian idea that God is the Father of all, and loves us all, with the very same love of the spirit—the Holy Spirit—which he desires and encourages us all to bring into the family relation, and indeed into all our relations to one another as brethren, and to him as ‘our Father.’ It is only out of this principle that you can attain to all kinds of purity alike—purity for the young, purity for the married. All is dominated and controlled alike by *ἀγάπη*, that pure love which is identical with the love of God to us all, of Christ for us all as brethren, which should therefore be the prevailing element in all our love towards God and man and woman. And thus even our mortal bodies (as St. Paul tells us in more than one place) are to be redeemed from corruption, and fitted for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. ‘Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in



you,'—(he says, speaking of those very sins of impurity with which we are now concerned, as they occurred in the Church at Corinth),—'which ye have of God; and ye are not your own. For ye were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body' (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, R. V.). And his final appeal, not only against these sins, but against every kind of lowering of the tone of the Christian life, is to the effect that we thereby cast out the Holy Spirit, and ruin the temple. 'Know ye not,' he says, 'that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' The Holy Spirit dwells in every one of us, if we do not, deliberately or recklessly, cast it out; but we shall effectually cast it out if we give ourselves to any of these practices. 'If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye' (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17).



## APPENDIX

*Note (chiefly from Cremer's Lexicon of the New Testament) on the words expressive of 'Love' in biblical Greek, and also in the Latin, German, and English versions.*

THE Greek language has three words for 'to love'—*φιλεῖν*, *ἐρᾶν*, *ἀγαπᾶν*. *Ἐρᾶν* denotes the love of passion—of vehement, sensual desire; but so unsuitable was the word, by usage so saturated with lustful ideas, to express the moral and holy character of that love with which the Scripture in particular has to do, that it does not occur in a good sense even in the Old Testament, and not at all in the New Testament. Concerning this latter fact Trench well says: 'In part, no doubt, the explanation of this absence is that these words (*ἔρως*, *ἐρᾶν*, *ἐραστής*), by the corrupt use of the word, had become so steeped in earthly sensual passion, carried such an atmosphere of unholiness about them, that the truth of God abstained from the defiling contact with them.' *Ἀγαπᾶν* and *φιλεῖν* are used, indeed, in many cases synonymously; they even seem sometimes to be used the one in place of the other. Yet a distinction, not too subtle, exists between the two words. *Ἀγαπᾶν* possesses a meaning of its own, which, in

spite of other points of agreement, never belongs to φιλεῖν, viz. *to be contented, to be satisfied with*. Where the love which belongs to the sphere of divine revelation is spoken of, ἀγαπᾶν is systematically used, while φιλεῖν has received no distinctive colouring at all. We shall not go wrong if we define the distinction thus: Φιλεῖν denotes the love of natural inclination, affection,—love, so to say, originally spontaneous, involuntary (*amare*); ἀγαπᾶν, on the other hand, love as a direction of the will (*diligere*). This must be regarded as the true and adequate explanation, at least as regards Scripture usage, and it is confirmed by the testimony of classical usage. The moral and holy love, which is and must be brought to light by divine revelation, may even possibly stand in opposition to natural inclination; whereas the love of inclination, φιλεῖν, includes also the ἀγαπᾶν. The range of φιλεῖν is wider than that of ἀγαπᾶν, but ἀγαπᾶν stands all the higher above φιλεῖν on account of its moral import. Though the word did not as yet contain this element of moral reflection in the classics, still it was the proper vessel to receive the fulness of biblical import. And as in the New Testament, the right word for that love of which the New Testament treats—love which is to be estimated morally, and which is designed for eternity—could no longer be dispensed with, ἀγάπη (a word formed perhaps by the LXX. as a companion to ἀγαπᾶν, and wholly unknown in the classics) became, in New Testament language, the distinctive designation of divine love, while the Greeks knew only ἔρως, φιλία, and στοργή. This state of things is already recognised in the Vulgate. Ἀγαπᾶν is once rendered by *amare*,—i.e. excep-

tionally and in a bad sense in reference to Balaam, *qui mercedem iniquitatis amavit* (2 Pet. ii. 15),—but in all other cases *diligere* is commonly used, and ἀγάπη is represented either by *caritas* or by *dilectio*. How greatly Scripture usage has enriched the word ἀγαπᾶν becomes apparent on comparison with the notices of the word given in classical lexicons. Classical Greek knows nothing, for instance, of the use of ἀγαπᾶν to designate compassionating love, or the love that freely chooses its object. The peculiar New Testament use of ἀγαπᾶν would seem to have rendered necessary, so to speak, the introduction of ἀγάπη, a word apparently coined by the LXX., and unknown both to Philo and Josephus. Ἀγάπη in the LXX. does not, it is true, possess any special force analogous to that which it has in the New Testament, unless we choose to lay stress upon its use in Solomon's Song; but from 2 Sam. xiii. 15, Eccles. ix. 1, 6, it is clear that the LXX. aimed at a more decided term than the language then afforded them—a term as strong in its way as μῖσος—for which ἔρωσ, φιλα, στροφή, were too weak; indeed, it is worthy of remark in general, that while hatred in all its energy was, love in its divine greatness was not, known and named in profane Greek. (See Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, English translation by Urwick, pp. 9-14.) The above extracts, however, are extremely condensed, and only aim at giving the mere ultimate results of an exhaustive inquiry, based upon numerous citations, for which the original should be referred to.

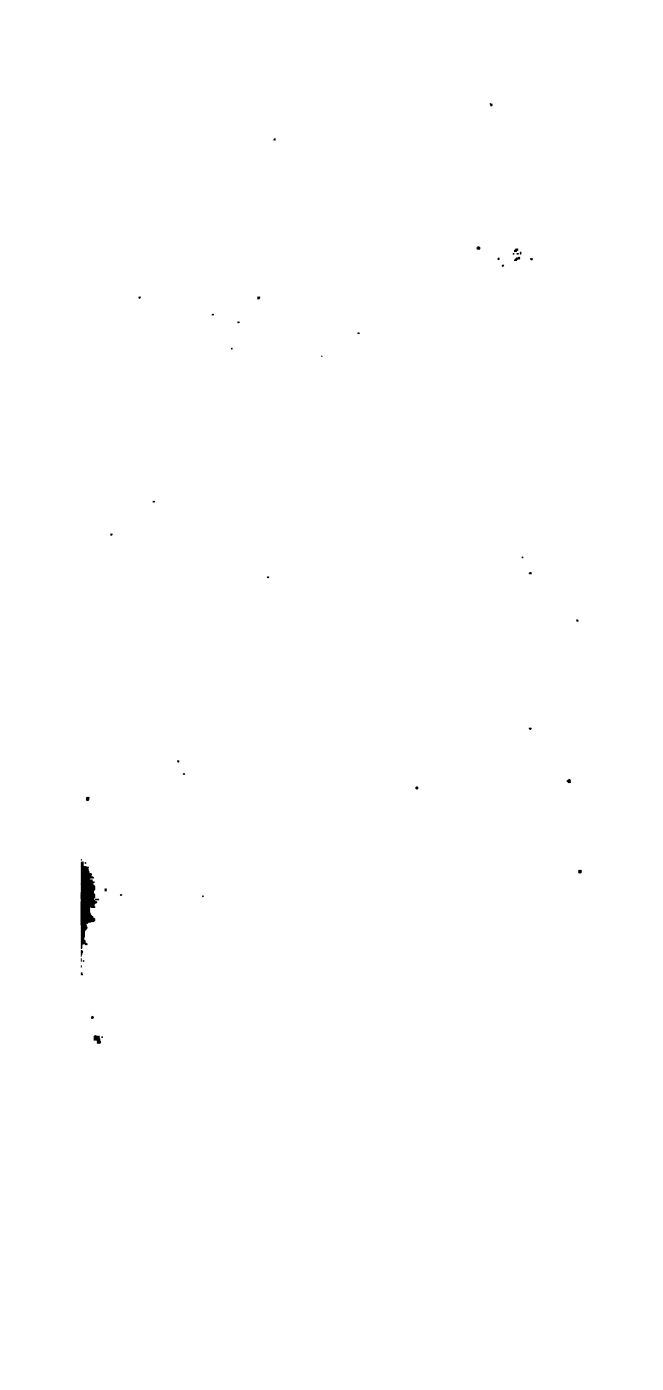
From the above allusion to the Vulgate, it is evident that the early Latin trans-

lators of the New Testament were restrained from the use of *amo* and *amor* by a similar instinct to that which excluded the Greek words connected with *ἐπᾶν*, for the classical word *amor* was, in fact, a hopelessly poisoned or degraded word in their eyes, not fit to replace the Greek *ἀγάπη*, and for the most part unworthy to be applied to God, or even to man where the higher emotions were concerned; and hence the curious and very inconvenient practice was adopted of translating *ἀγάπη* mostly by *caritas* (which has no corresponding verb), and *ἀγαπᾶν* by *diligere*, of which the corresponding noun *dilectio* is not in accordance with classical usage. The Authorised Version, as is well known, follows the Vulgate in reading 'charity' in 1 Cor. xiii., where (as it happens) there is no occasion for the verb, and in a few other places; but, for the most part, and especially in the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, the rendering first adopted by Tyndale throughout, and objected to as an innovation by Sir Thomas More at the time, is adhered to; the noun and the verb are alike rendered *love*; and thus not only has that word *for us* (like the German *Liebe* in Luther's version) been preserved in its higher significance; but the incongruities which will be sufficiently manifest in the Latin version, where the verb and the noun occur close together, in such passages as 1 John iv. 7-10, have been entirely avoided. It may reasonably afford matter for thought, in connection with some parts of the preceding address, whether the bold and, in a great degree, successful attempt to redeem this word in English and German from its baser associations, may not have had a very notable effect upon our national



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life and character. Conversely, had it been, or appeared at the time, possible to the Latin translators to have effectually redeemed the word *amor* from its baser uses, by associating it with *ἀγάπη* in the Vulgate, is it not at least conceivable that *amour* would nowadays have sounded somewhat differently, even in their ordinary language, in the mouths of Frenchmen?



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